Public confirmation

in a communion service

Church members who have passed confirmation school (rippikoulu) have the right to be confirmed. In one’s confirmation, a once-in-a-lifetime event, one confesses the faith of the church and receives the right to take part independently in holy communion. A pastor or a theologian with the status of a “lector” (lehtori) leads the rite of confirmation (Church Order, chapter 3, clause 5).

This order (agenda B) for confirmation is based on the order for a weekday communion service. A confirmation service is prepared together with the confirmands.

At some points, the wording presumes that the confirmands are adolescents and possibly also that they have all been baptized as infants. If that is not the case, this order is used, but necessary adjustments must be made to the wording.

The service begins when the confirmands and those who serve the congregation enter as a procession. A cross is carried at the head of the procession, followed by candle bearers. The confirmands come next, followed by confirmation school teachers and assistants. The presiding minister (pastor) comes last.

I Gathering

\*1. Opening hymn

Instead of a hymn, a psalm or choir music or an instrumental prelude may be used.

The cross and candles are put in place near the altar, and the confirmands move into the front pews.

2. Invocation and greeting

The invocation and greeting may be sung or said.

Invocation

P In the name of the Father, and of the B Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Greeting

P The Lord be with you

C and with your spirit.

3. Introductory words

The pastor speaks in his/her own words or these words:

P Dear Christians. We have gathered today for a confirmation service together with these young people. We hear God’s word, we confess the faith we share, we pray and we thank God. We are also invited to the Holy supper of our Lord.

Dear young people. God’s love has been present in your life from the very beginning. Today we give thanks for baptism and for the years of growth we have shared and your time of confirmation school. We ask for God’s blessing for the future and pray that God would strengthen you in faith and encourage you to live as Christians.

Christ is the light of the world. This light overcomes the darkness of sin and death. Trusting in his grace we now confess our sins together.

4. Confession and forgiveness

Confession of sins

The confession may be read in unison. Kneeling is also a possibility. The confession may also be divided into parts with interpolated sentences or sung verses of prayer or with moments of silence. The confession may include silent personal prayer preceded by an exhortative or introductory phrase such as “Hear my silent confession as well.”

Two alternatives for confession are given here:

1. Heavenly Father,

I was baptized to be your child.

You removed me from darkness to light,

from damnation to be an heir of heaven.

I have not, however, lived as your child should live.

I have not listened to your voice; I have not obeyed your will.

God, have mercy on me for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ.

Wash me clean and forgive all my sin.

2. Lord,

you are the light, but I have not looked at you.

You are the way, but I have not followed you.

You are the truth, but I have not held on to you.

You are the life, but I have not confessed it.

You are my guide, but I have not obeyed you.

And then, Lord,

when I do what is wrong and mess up my life,

I feel miserable and blame you for it.

Lord, forgive me.

I ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ,

my Savior.

Declaration of forgiveness (Absolution)

The “Amen” following the declaration of forgiveness may be sung or said.

Two alternative declarations of forgiveness are given here:

1. Thus says the Lord,

“Do not fear,

for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name, you are mine.

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,

but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,

and my covenant of peace shall not be removed.” (Isaiah 43:1 and 54:10)

2. Jesus says,

“Take courage, my friend,

your sins are forgiven.”

[As his servant I declare to you forgiveness of sins

in the name of the Father, and of the (B) Son, and of the Holy Spirit.]

C Amen.

5. Hymn

This hymn may be replaced with some other kind of music or a moment for silent meditation.

6. Prayer of the day (the Collect)

One may use a prayer given for the day in the calendar or one of the three alternatives given below.

Any part of this prayer (the call to prayer, the prayer itself or the amen) may either be sung or said. The call to prayer may be followed by a short moment for silent prayer.

P Let us pray.

1. Dear God, heavenly Father,

you have taken us in baptism to be your own

as members of your family.

Take care of us always and be with us,

so that we will bravely confess to be your followers.

Help us to love you and each other.

This we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. God, our Father,

the sign of the cross was drawn on our forehead and chest at baptism,

showing that we belong to you.

Together with the young people who are confirmed today

we thank you for that.

Uphold us in battle against the power of evil.

Make us instruments of your peace.

Help us to grow in faith

and to love each other according to your will.

Hear us for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. Come, Holy Spirit,

and turn fear into hope,

turn unbelief and doubt into confidence,

and weakness into strength.

Come even to places where powers of evil are at work.

Come, Spirit of peace and love.

Come and bless our confirmation;

make this a festival of joy and love.

C Amen.

II God’s Word

7. Scripture reading and a sermon

It is preferable to read a gospel lesson suited to the time of the church year. In addition to a gospel lesson or instead of it, however, a passage from the Old or New Testament may be read. It is also possible to use one of the following passages as the text of the sermon: 1 Timothy 6:11 – 12, 2 Timothy 3:14 – 17, Matthew 4:18 – 20 or Mark 8:34 – 37.

A response (a psalm, hymn, song, instrumental music or silent meditation) may follow the reading before the sermon is delivered.

The sermon may include words of encouragement to the confirmands and their parents and godparents.

III Confirmation

At the end of the sermon, the confirmands are called forward.

A hymn or some other kind of music may be added here.

8. Creed

P Dear young people. When you were baptized, your parents and godparents recited the creed. The creed is a confession of faith, expressing what God gives to us as a gift and what he does on our behalf. Together with the congregation we now confess our Christian faith.

\*Apostoles’ Creed

C I believe in God,

the Father almighty,

Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit

and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting.

9. Question or exhortation

Question

P Dear confirmands. You have been baptized into this faith and instructed according to it. Do you want, with the help of God’s grace, to express this faith in your life?

The confirmands answer in unison:

I do.

P May God uphold your commitment and fasten you to Christ.

Exhortation

P Dear confirmands. You have been baptized into this faith and instructed according to it. May God grant you grace to express this faith in your life. May he fasten you to Christ.

10. Laying on of hands

The confirmands kneel at the altar rail to be blessed with laying on of hands. Assistants (godparents, for example) may join the leader of the confirmation as each confirmand is blessed individually.

The rest of the congregation may sing a hymn at this time.

P Receive a blessing.

P [NN (name)]

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

After the blessing, the confirmand may reply with “Amen” and sign himself/herself with the cross.

After all confirmands have received the blessing, they rise. As a group, they may return to their seats at this point or after the exhortations (# 11) or after presenting a song (# 12), whatever has been agreed upon.

11. Words of encouragement

These words may be included in the sermon (# 7). In that case they are skipped here, and the service continues with a hymn or song (# 12) or the prayer of intercession (# 13).

Encouragement to the newly confirmed

P Dear young people. You have received the blessing of the triune God. You can trust that God will not forsake you. The Holy Spirit has started a good work in you when you were baptized, and he encourages you to live as followers of Christ. God has given his church his holy word and holy communion and prayer to strengthen the faith of Christians. From now on you may independently take part in the Lord’s supper, and you also have the right to become godparents. The congregation prays for you and hopes that you will move on along the way of life.

Encouragement to parents and godparents

P Dear parents and godparents and others in this congregation, these young ones need people who will pray for them and help them to grow as Christians. Keep with them and support them to grow in faith and keep to the way of eternal life. May God help you in this task.

12. Hymn

Instead of a hymn sung by the whole congregation, those who have been confirmed may present a suitable song.

13. Prayer of intercession

The prayer of intercession may be prepared beforehand together with the confirmands. It is possible to divide the prayer into parts with interpolated sentences or sung verses of prayer or with moments of silence. An example is given below.

The call to prayer and the amen may be sung or said.

R Let us pray.

Dear God, our heavenly Father, we thank you for your promise to be with us every day until the end of the world.

We pray for these [young] people who have been confirmed today. Help them to grow in faith and to become rooted in your word. Revive their strength with fellowship in the congregation. Make them open to your love and help them to share it with others. When difficulties arise, encourage them to trust in you. Support them when they make big decisions in life.

Bless and protect your church and its workers and all who have been elected to positions of responsibility in it. Be with all members of the congregation, so that the message of your love would be heard far away.

Bless our sisters and brothers near and far. Give wisdom to leaders in this world, so that nations could settle their differences without war.

Bless and protect all who have been struck my misfortune, sorrow or illness, and those who have lost their hope. Give them courage and will to live, and let them feel that you are near and looking after them.

Bless and protect our homes, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, grandparents and godparents and all our dear ones. Bring comfort to those who are lonely. Create unity and friendship between people, and make us all willing to help each other.

Almighty God, we thank you for being able to leave our life in your hands. Guide us finally to your eternal kingdom.

C Amen.

IV The Lord’s Supper

14. Preparation of the Lord’s table

A hymn is usually sung here as an offertory while the pastor (possibly with assistants) prepares the Lord’s table. If offerings of money are given in the service, they are collected during the hymn. (The beneficiary of the offering is announced before the hymn, and the offering may be blessed after the collection is done.) The hymn may be replaced by a choir presentation or instrumental music.

15. Eucharistic prayer

Opening dialogue of the prayer

In Finland, this opening dialogue of the Eucharistic prayer is always sung. This translation, however, has not been made to music, so it is to be said.

P The Lord be with you

C and with your spirit.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C It is right and honorable to do so.

Preface

The preface may be sung or said. It is possible to sing this translation, too, with a Gregorian chant tune (tonus ferialis).

Beginning of the preface

P Truly it is right and honorable

to give thanks to you at all times and in all places,

holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ending of the preface

P In baptism you have called us to be your children

and promised to be with us every day.

We thank you for this gift of heaven,

and with all your angels and saints

we sing our praise to you:

\*Sanctus

After the Sanctus, the congregation may be seated or remain standing until the Agnus Dei.

C Holy, holy, holy Lord Sabaoth!

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

Prayer and the words of institution

If the opening dialogue, preface and Sanctus are omitted, the eucharistic prayer begins with the exhortation: “Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.”

This prayer and the words of institution may be said or sung. Alternatives to this prayer can be found in the order for a communion service (alternatives 1, 2 and 3 in # 20 of that agenda).

Heavenly Father, Creator of all,

with gratitude we recall what you have done for us:

You sent your Son to save the world.

He became a human, was one of us, but without sin.

He fulfilled your will in every way

and accepted suffering and death

to redeem us from bondage.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed,

took bread, gave a blessing (B), broke the bread

and gave it to his disciples, saying,

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way he took the cup, gave thanks (B) and said,

“Drink from it, all of you.

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

which is poured out for you

for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink from it,

in remembrance of me.”

Gracious Father,

we want to fulfill this command

and celebrate the holy supper in remembrance of your Son

and so proclaim his death until he comes.

[C We proclaim his death.

We witness his resurrection.

We wait for his coming in glory.]

We ask you in prayer:

Send us your Holy Spirit,

that we might trust the promise of forgiveness

and receive in faith the body and blood of your Son for our salvation

until we meet him in your kingdom.

Through him, with him and in him

in the unity of the Holy Spirit

all honor and glory belong to you, Almighty Father,

always and forever.

C Amen.

16. Lord’s prayer

The Lord’s prayer is said in unison. It may also be sung.

C Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours

now and for ever.

Amen.

17. Greeting of peace

This responsive greeting is meant to be sung. This translation, however, has not been made to music, so the greeting is said instead.

After this greeting, participants in the service may be encouraged to greet each other personally with words of peace such as “The peace of Christ be with you.”

P The peace of the Lord be with you

C and with your spirit.

\*18. Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)

This is meant to be sung. Music is not provided here, however, so this may be said.

The pastor may choose to break the bread during the Agnus Dei.

The Agnus Dei may also be sung during the distribution of the bread and wine.

C Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

grant us peace.

19. Communion

Invitation to communion

P Come, receive the body of Christ.

Come, drink from the fountain of immortality.

Distribution

Singing of hymns or presentation of some other music may take place during the distribution.

The one who gives bread says:

The body of [our Lord Jesus] Christ, given for you.

The communicant may answer: Amen.

The one who bears the cup says:

The blood of [our Lord Jesus] Christ, poured out for you.

The communicant may answer: Amen.

Words to conclude the meal

After these words, the dishes used for communion are covered (and possibly removed to an auxiliary table). The words may be followed by a moment of silence.

P We have received the Lord Jesus Christ. May he protect and keep us until eternal life.

C Amen.

OR

P May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ

preserve our spirit, soul and body

[, the entire being of each of us,] until eternal life.

C Amen.

20. Prayer of thanksgiving

Any part of this prayer (the call to prayer, the prayer itself or the amen) may either be sung or said.

A suitable hymn may also be used as a prayer of thanksgiving. If that is done, the next item (# 21 Praise) is omitted.

P Let us pray.

We thank you, heavenly Father,

for the gift of holy communion.

Thank you for your great love toward us.

Help us to live close to you and close to each other.

Hear our prayer

for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

V Conclusion

21. Praise

If a hymn has been sung as a prayer of thanksgiving (# 20), this is omitted.

Benedicamus or a hymn of praise is used.

Benedicamus

This is meant to be sung. Music is not provided here, however, so this may be said.

R Let us praise the Lord!

C Thanks be to God! Halleluia, halleluia, halleluia!

During Lent from Ash Wednesday to the Wednesday of the Passion Week:

R Let us praise the Lord!

C Thanks be to God! Amen.

\*22. Benediction

The benediction may be said or sung.

P The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face shine upon you,

and be gracious to you:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you,

and give you peace.

In the name of the Father, and of the B Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Dismissal

The dismissal is said just before the people leave.

P/R Go in peace and serve the Lord with gladness.

OR

P/R Go in peace.

Be brave,

hold on to what is good,

[do not repay evil for evil.

encourage the faint hearted,

help the weak,

lift burdens of the oppressed,]

treat all people with respect.

Love and serve the Lord with gladness

in the power of the Holy Spirit.

\*23. Concluding music

A hymn or choir music or an instrumental postlude is suitable here.

During the music those who came in as a procession exit in the order in which they entered, following the cross. Others in the congregation may join the procession.